Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

trations in the text. It is hoped that it will prove a valuable number to those beginning to study insects. Part III, to be issued in September, will contain chapters on the Wild Bees, Wasps, Ants, and other Hymenoptera, with three full-page illustrations and numerous cuts.

As there has been some misunderstanding regarding the price of the work and the number of parts to be issued, and how they should be paid for, we would state that it will be issued in from eight to ten parts, probably ten, of sixty-four pages each, and it would be a great convenience to the publishers if subscribers would send $4.00, *in advance*, for the first eight numbers. Address the author at Salem, Mass.

NATURAL HISTORY MISCELLANY.

ZOÖLOGY.

A Review of some of the Articles published in this Journal respecting the Habits and Nesting of our Birds, with Additional Facts. — The oölogical department of ornithology affords ample scope for the most enthusiastic observer to glean something new continually. Different localities and different circumstances modify very much the manner of nesting, as well as the number of eggs; in fact, eggs vary in color occasionally. In the first volume, page 435 of this Journal, Mr. Samuels speaks of several specimens of Indigo-birds' eggs "sprinkled with dots of pale-red." Of a large number of Indigo-birds' eggs, collected by myself and received from others during the last twenty years, they have invariably been white, with a bluish tinge, yet I have other eggs as singularly marked. I have full sets of Cooper's-hawks' eggs, without a blotch upon them, and others blotched with brown, and one set blotched with red. I have the eggs of the Blue-bird pure white, and polished like those of the family Picidæ (Woodpeckers). I have a set of four of the Red-shouldered Hawk's eggs, two of which are pure white, and two blotched with red, as they usually are. I have taken a set of four of crow's eggs this season that have no bluish tinge about them whatever. They are flesh-colored, blotched with red, resembling in markings the egg of the *Pipilo erythropthalmus* (Chewink). The changing of colored or spotted eggs to white is easily accounted for. The coloring matter is deposited on the shell in the oviduct, so that as a consequence of disease of the glands which furnish the coloring matter, the eggs may be laid uncolored. These are exceptions, not the rule, but of frequent occurrence enough to make us cautious and not too positive in our assertions. In no way can we get at all the facts, correct errors, and reconcile statements, unless each collector carefully observes, and truthfully gives his own experience in the various fields of pursuit.

In Vol. I, No. 7, p. 343, is a very interesting article on the Encampment of the Herons. As the writer differs in some particulars from my observations, I will give my experience. There has been an encampment of herons some sixteen miles from my office for many years, probably fifty, and perhaps one hundred. It has been there as long as any one remembers the place. I have been in the habit of visiting it for nearly twenty years. The tract on which they nest consists of very tall, slim trees, from sixty to ninety feet high, running up from thirty to fifty feet without a limb, and covering over a belt of ground one and a half miles in length by one-half mile in breadth. Before visiting the ground I sent there for two years in succession, offering a liberal reward to any one who would procure me some eggs. No one would venture, as the trees were in very wet ground, and in water, difficult to climb, and partly covered with the excrements of the birds. I was telling a sailor of my inability to get any one to climb the trees, when he roguishly inquired "if the trees were made of wood," remarking that "he could climb any tree made of wood." The next day found us in the swamp, and such a sight I never before saw. The woods were filled with the Quawks (*Nyctiardea Gardenii*); there were thousands, and their noise was almost deafening on being disturbed, or, as Wilson graphically describes it, "it would almost induce one to suppose that two or three hundred Indians were choking or throttling each other." I counted eight nests on one tree, and many trees contained four and five. *Most of the nests were out on the limbs*, where it was very difficult to get at them; but there is no such thing as can't to a naturalist, when the prize is in view. A goodly number of eggs were obtained. Two years ago the past season I took with me three climbers, and secured a large supply of eggs. While returning we made a rough estimate of the distance climbed. As my cords for letting down the boxes of eggs were all measured, we could tell pretty accurately the height of the nests. They varied from fifty to eighty feet, making an average of about sixty-five feet. One of my collectors, with creepers, climbed over twenty trees, which, in ascending and descending, would make over half a mile, and that, too, in a rain storm, as it commenced storming soon after we arrived at the swamp and continued all day. This encampment is now nearly broken up, as a part of the trees have been cut off, and the sportsmen have wantonly shot the birds. Two hunters visited this place with a business waggon, and brought it back full of night-herons. There must have been between two and three hundred killed. This is the second heronry that I have been in the habit of visiting to replenish my oölogical collection from, and yet I have *never found over four eggs, and more commonly but three in a nest, and the nests were generally on limbs*. I mention these facts, not to throw doubt on the statements of Mr. Endicott, but to show that birds in different sections nest differently, and lay a greater or less number of eggs according to circumstances. I have sometimes thought that the birds were more prolific near the seashore where food is procured in such abundance.

In Vol. I, No. 9, p. 496, Mr. Samuels and Mr. Fowler disagree regarding the nesting of the Belted Kingfisher and Mottled Owl. My observations agree with both in some particulars, and disagree with both in other respects. I have been in the habit of collecting from one to three nests a year for fifteen or twenty years, of the *Ceryle Alcyon.* I take a light cane-pole about eight feet long and a spade with me, and follow down the banks of Scantic River in the nesting-season (middle of May to the first of June), and when I find a fresh hole, running horizontally, of suitable size and place for a Kingfisher, I carefully introduce the pole, ascertain the length of the hole, and by withdrawing the pole, and placing it on the top of the ground in the same line and distance introduced, the end of it will be exactly over the nest, as the nest is always at the extreme end. I then dig down upon it, going back upon the hole some six inches, so as not to break the eggs by the falling earth. In this way I get a fine view of the nest without disturbing it. In one instance the parent bird was so tenacious of her rights, that she allowed me to lift her from her nest. The nest is from eighteen inches to two feet under the surface, and generally *from four to six feet into the bank.* I never have found but one within three feet, and that was in a clay-bank. I have invariably found *the hole straight,* in whatever line it starts; if it starts to the right or left, *it follows that line, and so straight, that my pole reaches the end of the excavation without any trouble.* In stony ground, possibly, the bird may find it necessary to deviate from a straight line, but as we are not troubled with stones, I can only speak from experience in sandy soil. The eggs, usually *seven* in number, are *laid on the sand* in a small cavity made for them.

I can corroborate the statements of Mr. Samuels respecting the nesting of the Mottled Owl. "The nest is made at the bottom of the hole, and is constituted of grass, leaves, moss, and sometimes a few feathers. It is not elaborately made, being nothing more than a heap of soft materials." I cannot fully indorse the statement of Mr. Fowler "that rapacious birds are awkward workmen at nest-building, especially the owl." If Mr. F. had confined his remarks to the family of Strygidæ, all naturalists would agree with him, so far at least as pertains to the owls of New England. I can speak from observation of the Great-horned, Barred, Long-eared, Short-eared, and Mottled Owl. Of hawks I have collected nine varieties of eggs and nests, or young and nests in Connecticut,—the Fish, Red-tailed, Red-shouldered, Broad-winged, Cooper's, Sharp-shinned, Sparrow, Great-footed, and Marsh-hawk. All, with the exception of the last three, are good nest-builders. The Cooper's Hawk excels in the neatness and arrangement of her nest. It would puzzle a Yankee to do it any better out of the same materials. The Marsh-hawk makes a nest of small sticks and coarse grass, mostly the latter. I have found quite a number of their nests, and they appear like a promiscuous mixing together of material without any particular order or plan, any farther than to keep the eggs from the damp ground. I believe that they rebuild their old nests sometimes, for I have one in my office which has the appearance of being occupied three seasons, with small additions each year. I know they will use the same nest more than once the same year if their eggs are taken. Some few years since one of my collectors came upon a nest of the Marsh-hawk and took the eggs. Some two weeks after he took five eggs more from the nest, and in a few days from that time he went to the nest and took two more eggs and shot the old bird, as she was altogether too familiar with his chickens.

In Vol. I, No. 11, p. 584, is a very truthful and life-like description of the Chicadee,—its habits, nesting, etc. The writer speaks of the habits of the Butcher-bird of killing it, and says, "if he does not devour it upon the spot, it is hung on the crotch of a limb to serve as a meal at some future time." I would like to ask Mr. Fowler if he knows that to be a fact from his own observations? Can any one give positive information upon the subject? I know this is received as a fact by most naturalists, and it may seem egotistical for me to doubt it, yet I have for years watched the *Collyrio borealis* from the time it arrives here in the fall until it goes north in the spring; have seen birds and grasshoppers suspended from a crotch or impaled on a thorn or sharp stick by them; but I never knew it return to devour them, although I have carefully watched for weeks. I think the bird does it for mere sport. It could hardly be expected that so active a hunter would be satisfied with stale food when better is so easily obtained.—WM. WOOD, M. D., *East Windsor Hill, Conn.*

THE DWARF THRUSH.—In the NATURALIST for June there is a notice of a Dwarf Thrush (*Turdus nanus*) killed in Waltham, Mass. On the 10th April, 1866, I had the good fortune to obtain a bird of the same species near Orange, N. J. Like the one mentioned by Mr. Samuels, it was found in a high, dry woodland. I do not, however, consider this fact as of any value in determining its specific difference from *T. Pallasii*, as I have repeatedly found the latter bird in precisely similar localities.*

It may also be interesting to ornithologists to know that a pair of Bohemian Waxwings were observed in this neighborhood on the 28th April, 1867. It is very rarely that this bird ever comes so far south, and then it is usually in the depth of winter.—T. MARTIN TRIPPE, *Orange, N. Y.*

THE HONEY-BEE GLEANING AFTER THE ORIOLE.—Two little girls, the elder scarcely six years of age, were picking the flowers of the Buffalo, or Missouri Currant (*Ribes aureum*), "to get the honey." They saw honey-bees around the bushes. They observed that many of the flowers had one or two little holes at the base of the calyx tube, and that such

---

*As the following description of the specimen which I shot differs somewhat from that given by Mr. Samuels, I judge it best to insert it here, hoping that it may be of use in settling the still doubtful question as to the specific difference of *T. nanus* and *T. Pallasii:*—Feathers of the crown with their centres much darker than their edges, so as to present a streaked appearance; ear-coverts quite distinctly streaked with white; sides of the body under the wings and breast with a bluish tinge, the under wing-coverts being of a similar color; throat, belly, and under tail-coverts pure white; tail feathers with a bluish purple tinge, especially on their inner webs. Length, 7 inches; alar extent, 11.10; wing, 3.75; tail, 3. Otherwise as in *T. Pallasii.*

flowers were not as sweet as the others. They said the bees had torn them open with their jaws, and sucked out the honey.

For two seasons I have examined large numbers of these flowers in different parts of the village, and found many of them had been torn open. Several times I have seen the Baltimore Oriole rapidly going over the bushes, giving each fresh flower a prick with the tip of his beak. No other birds have been seen doing this; nor have I ever been able to see a honey-bee attempt to make a hole at the side of a flower. The calyx-tube is too long for the honey-bee, so she contents herself with gleaning after the oriole, selecting the injured flowers, and leaving the fresh ones for birds and humble-bees.—W. J. BEAL, *Union Springs, N. Y.*

REMARKABLE FLIGHT OF CROWS.—An account of a remarkable flight of crows I once witnessed may, perhaps, be of interest to some of your readers. The organization of which I was a member, was stationed in March and April, 1863, at Poolsville, Md., on the Upper Potomac, mid-way, or nearly so, between Washington and Harper's Ferry. One afternoon in April I was posted as sentinel "between the guns," with instructions there to walk until six; it was then four.

Soon after being posted, I saw two or three crows fly over, and soon five or six more, followed by nine or ten more; seeing them so increase I thought to count them, and for half an hour or so was able to do so with some degree of certainty; after that they formed one continuous stream, flying east by south in perfect silence. After that I could only estimate their number by calculating how many passed a given point in a minute. There was no apparent diminution in their numbers as the time passed on; but the line shifted towards the north, as though they were advancing "in echelon," and when it finally grew dusky, they still presented the appearance of a low black cloud to the northward, their motion visible only when a break occurred in the line. I estimated that their number was eighty thousand up to the time that darkness prevented farther observation. Some weeks after I spoke with Dr. Thayer, Surgeon of the 14th N. H. Volunteers, on the subject, and found his estimate to be—if I remember rightly—ninety-five thousand. The species was the common *C. Americanus.*—W. E. ENDICOTT.

SINGULAR DEFORMITY IN A SILK MOTH.—All entomologists, who have much to do with breeding insects, know very well it is not an uncommon occurrence to meet with deformed insects; the deformity is generally in the wings. This deformity is particularly noticeable in that favorite of entomologists, the Luna moth. Several years ago I gathered quite a number of cocoons of the Cecropia, in order to get some fine specimens among the number. One came out, the wings spread nicely, but the left pair were considerable shorter than the opposite ones. But the most singular deformity occurred this summer. A Cecropia came out without antennæ. I at first thought it had broken them off in escaping from the cocoons, but it was not so; the moth was perfect in other respects. —R. BUNKER, *Rochester, N. Y.*

THE HONEY-ANT.—According to Wesmael, a Belgian naturalist, the *worker major* of this singular ant, which lives in Mexico, has the abdomen swollen at times like a balloon, and then perfectly transparent and filled with honey. These individuals are inactive, do not quit the nest, and their sole occupation is to elaborate a kind of honey, which they discharge into receptacles. This is the *Myrmecocystus Mexicanus*, or *hormigas mieleras*, or *mochileras*, i. e. honey-ants, or pouched-ants, of the Mexicans.

The major worker of *Crematogaster inflatus*, according to Mr. F. Smith, has a swollen bladder-like formation on the hinder part of the thorax (metathorax): "This singular apparatus is furnished with a small circular orifice at the posterior lateral angles, from which the saccharine fluid doubtless exudes. We may, therefore, reasonably conclude that this insect elaborates a suitable and necessary aliment for the nourishment of the young brood." A species of "Honey-ant" is also found in Texas.

THE GOLDEN-WINGED WOODPECKER.—A somewhat remarkable case, illustrating well one of the breeding peculiarities of the Golden-winged Woodpecker (*Colaptes auratus*), has just occurred under my notice. A pair of these birds commenced laying about the first week in May, in a nest that had been occupied for several years in succession. I removed the eggs carefully twice a week, leaving two in the nest each time; I have thus obtained thirty-three eggs, thirty-one of which are in my collection, the other two (the last) having been hatched during my absence. Their ordinary number, as every one knows, is only six. This is the most extensive case of the kind I have ever known. Can any of the readers of the NATURALIST surpass it?—W. K. KEDZIE, *Lansing, Mich.*

HABITS OF THE ELEPHANT.—In Ceylon, the Elephant seeks the shade of thick forests at the rising of the sun, in which he rests until about five o'clock, P. M., when he wanders forth upon the plains. In Africa, the country being generally more open, the elephant remains throughout the day either beneath a solitary tree, or exposed to the sun in the vast prairies, where the thick grass attains a height of from nine to twelve feet. The general food of the African elephant consists of the foliage of trees, especially of Mimosas. In Ceylon, although there are many trees that serve as food, the elephant nevertheless is an extensive grass-feeder. The African variety, being almost exclusively a tree-feeder, requires his tusks to assist him in procuring food. Many of the mimosas are flat-headed, about thirty feet high, and the richer portion of the foliage confined to the crown; thus the elephant, not being able to reach to so great a height, must overturn the tree to procure the coveted food. The destruction caused by a herd of African elephants in a mimosa forest is extraordinary; and I have seen trees uprooted of so large a size, that I am convinced no single elephant could have overturned them. I have measured trees four feet six inches in circumference, and about thirty feet high, uprooted by elephants.—BAKER'S *Albert Nyanza.*